

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Bureau of Fisheries

Noted
OCT 11 1924
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General Summary of Operations at Squaw Harbor, Alaska. Season of 1924.

The work at Squaw Harbor, Alaska for the season of 1924 consisted of clearing the stream channels of rocks and drift wherever necessary to enable the salmon to ascend to the spawning beds, placing markers at the mouths of the streams, visiting the Sockeye Salmon spawning grounds, inspecting the cannery and other fishing establishments and the traps at frequent intervals, and patrolling the fishing grounds to prevent the violation of the fishing regulations. The work of patrolling these waters was somewhat restricted on account of not having a larger boat. A small power dory was used in this work and as there was a considerable amount of rough weather during the fishing season it was not always possible to patrol the fishing grounds during the weekly closed periods. However, there were no violations of the law noted and the new fishing regulations, which became effective during the season, seemed to be quite satisfactory to all concerned except the provision which prohibits fishing within five hundred feet of the mouths of the streams. This caused some dissention among the local fishermen who contend that this provision puts them out of business because it is impossible to take salmon in paying quantities for commercial purposes outside of the five hundred yard limit, while the limit on the cannery in regard to the size of the pack and number of traps operated is removed. From the fisherman's point of view this is true, but the rule is an important one in regard to conserving the salmon run in the streams and could not be changed without danger to the salmon.

There are only two lakes in the Shumagin Islands that are of importance as Sockeye Spawning grounds; Acheredin Lake on Unga Island, and a lake near Red Cove on Popoff Island. Apparently the escapement to each of these lakes was very good. Acheredin Lake was closely watched and the lake at Red Cove was visited three times during the season. A lake in Orzoni Bay on the Alaska Peninsula, which is included in the Shumagin District, was visited at the height of the season and there seemed to be a good escapement of Sockeye Salmon at that point. A count of the fish taken in these waters was made and is fairly accurate, altho it is difficult to get the exact number of fish caught by taking the fishermen's word for it, and is given below. Acheredin Bay, 6,000 Sockeye Salmon. Red Cove, 20,000 Sockeye Salmon, Orzoni Bay, 30,000 Sockeye Salmon.

John Nelson Lake on Unga Island has in previous years been considered a good Sockeye Salmon spawning grounds, but there were practically no Sockeye Salmon in the lake this year. There is also a Sockeye Salmon Lake on Korovin Island but the Sockeye Salmon Run was very light at that point this season.

The Sockeye Salmon Run in this district came somewhat later than usual and was lighter than expected. The first good lift at the Pacific American Fisheries trap at Kelly Rock, where the run first appeared, was made on June 16th. The Humpback Run started earlier than usual and was very large. A good run of Chum Salmon also appeared and the prospects were good for a fair run of Silver Salmon, as they began coming into the traps early in July. The Pack figures were unavailable August 1st., after which date it was unnecessary to patrol these waters.

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Fishing operations for commercial purposes were conducted by the local fishermen on a very small scale. Only three outfits operated in this district, each using a half purse seine. Their total catch amounted to approximately 56,000 Sockeye Salmon and but a small number of the cheaper fish. The Pacific American Fisheries operated two traps in Popoff Strait, Kelly Rock Trap, and Big Valley Trap. They also drove two traps at Ivanof Bay on the Alaska Peninsula but up until August 1st. it was unnecessary to operate them as the traps in Popoff Strait supplied enough fish to keep the cannery running to full capacity. Kelly Rock Trap supplied the greater part of the Pack and proved to be a wonderful trap, as it was necessary at times to close one or both spillers to keep the fish from overcrowding. There were but very few days during the season when there were not at least 100,000 fish in sight in the pot, spillers and leads of this trap. Big Valley Trap was operated successfully during the latter part of July. The greater part of the Salmon caught in these traps are migrating fish, which are on their way to the spawning grounds to the Westward.

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Foreman.

COPY to Dr. Gilbert
10/14/24